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THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY JUDGED BY ITS HISTORY.

THE time is far distant when the people of this country can be persuaded to judge a political party by its platform and professions, without reference to its practices and history. Having been taught this lesson in the severe school of experience, the Democratic party is now earnestly striving to unload its history; to cast off its old and bad character. Unfortunately, it makes no satisfactory effort to substitute, in place of the old one, a new history which will be beneficial to the country or creditable to itself, or to build up such a new character as can only be done by a complete change of conduct.

The Democratic party of to-day is substantially the Democratic party of 1860. It had a solid South then; it has a solid South now. It rallied around its banners then the great mass of the dangerous classes in the large cities; it rallies them still. The draft-rioters of 1863 in the city of New York were Democrats; those who survive are still Democrats. The Democratic party in 1860 counted for its success upon the States of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Indiana, to add to its solid South; it counts upon those States still.

In 1860 it asserted the sovereignty of the States, and denied the right of coercion; in 1880 it, to all intents and purposes, announces

the same doctrine in its denial of the authority of the General Government to enforce its laws, even after their constitutional validity has been affirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States.

Time has made ravages in its ranks, but nevertheless its membership is practically the same to-day as in 1860. Toombs, Jefferson Davis, Hampton, Hill, Gordon, and Lamar, were among the leaders of the Democratic party South in 1860; they are to-day. Hancock, Seymour, Bayard, English, Thurman, and Ben Butler were among the leaders of the Democratic party North in 1860; and they are so still. The rank and file remain substantially the same. Occasionally a new recruit wanders in from the Republican party; but, in the main, the places made vacant by decease or casualties are made good by immigration and by the natural increase of population in the quarters where Democratic majorities are usually found.

In 1856 the Democratic party declared that "Congress has no power to charter a national bank; that we believe such an institution one of deadly hostility to the best interests of the country, dangerous to our republican institutions and the liberties of the people, and calculated to place the business of the country within the control of a centralized money power and above the laws and the will of the people." It affirms this doctrine in 1880, for its platform asserts, "We pledge ourselves anew to the constitutional doctrines and traditions of the Democratic party."

In its platform of 1856 it resolves: "That the Democratic party will faithfully abide by and uphold the principles laid down in the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions of 1798, and in the report of Mr. Madison to the Virginia Legislature in 1799; that it adopts those principles, as constituting one of the main foundations of its political creed, and is resolved to carry them out in their obvious meaning and import." Having pledged itself anew to its constitutional doctrines and traditions, the conclusion is inevitable that the Democratic party of to-day is as thoroughly committed to the doctrines of "State sovereignty" as it has ever been. Endorsing those doctrines in 1856, as "constituting one of the main foundations of its political creed," and resolving to "carry them out in their obvious meaning and import," it renews that pledge in 1880. In 1860 both branches of the Democratic party reaffirmed the platform of 1856.

In 1864 it resolved, "That, in the future, as in the past, we will adhere with unswerving fidelity to the Union under the Constitu-

tion." It also more specifically sets forth its doctrines and purposes in the resolution declaring "That the aim and object of the Democratic party is to preserve the Federal Union and the rights of the States unimpaired."

Making practical application of its doctrines, it resolved "That this Convention does explicitly declare, as the sense of the American people, that after four years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment of war, during which, under the pretense of a military necessity or war-power higher than the Constitution, the Constitution itself has been disregarded in every part, and public liberty and private right alike trodden down, and the material prosperity of the country essentially impaired, justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare demand that immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities with a view to the ultimate convention of the States, or other peaceable means, to the end that at the earliest practicable moment peace may be restored on the basis of the Federal Union of the States."

It will not escape observation that, in its platform of 1864, the Democratic party was entirely silent as to the right of the Government to prosecute the war for its own preservation. It reaffirmed the State-sovereignty ideas of its previous platforms ; it denounced the measures which the Government employed for the suppression of rebellion ; it declared the war an "experiment," and that experiment a "failure" ; it demanded a cessation of hostilities and a restoration of peace on a basis consistent with its old doctrines. Unchanged in spirit and policy, the Democratic party in 1880 pledges itself anew to its "constitutional doctrines and traditions."

The courage, patriotism, and endurance of the people answered the Democratic platform of 1864, crushed the rebellion, and defeated its armies. The war was not a failure. The work of reconstruction followed, and, looking to peace and security for the future, the loyal masses determined that the Union should be restored upon a basis that would secure to all its citizens perfect equality of political privileges and immunities; an unmistakable denial of the Democratic doctrine of State sovereignty, a denial of the right of secession, and the extirpation of slavery.

True to its history and to its "constitutional doctrines and traditions," the Democratic party opposed this method of reconstruction. It demanded in the platform for 1868 "Immediate restoration of all the States to their rights in the Union under the Constitution, and of civil government to the American people."

It emphasized its general demand by specific denunciations and declarations. It resolved that any attempt by Congress to interfere with any State in regulating the suffrage of its citizens "is a flagrant usurpation of power which can find no warrant in the Constitution, . . . and that we regard the reconstruction acts (so called) of Congress, as such, as usurpations, and unconstitutional, revolutionary, and void."

It indulged in the most gloomy forebodings as to the future if the reconstruction policy were pursued, and, speaking of Congress, held this solemn language: "Under its repeated assaults, the pillars of the government are rocking on their base, and, should it succeed in November next and inaugurate its President, we will meet as a subjected and conquered people amid the ruins of liberty and the scattered fragments of the Constitution."

It concluded its declarations, denunciations, and resolutions concerning the aggressive measures of Congress and its dismal lamentations over the frightful calamities impending in the future by an unqualified endorsement of Andrew Johnson in these words: "That the President of the United States, Andrew Johnson, in exercising the power of his high office in resisting the aggressions of Congress upon the constitutional rights of the States and the people, is entitled to the gratitude of the whole American people, and in behalf of the Democratic party we tender him our thanks for his efforts in that regard."

To all these doctrines the Democratic party has in the year 1880 pledged itself anew with especial emphasis, for it has placed at the head of its ticket one who was in full sympathy with that platform; who so expressed himself at the time of its adoption by the Democratic Convention; who helped to make up the history out of which the platform itself was constructed; who in New Orleans assisted Andrew Johnson in resisting the "aggressions of Congress"; who attempted to nullify the reconstruction measures, which this platform denounced as usurpations, unconstitutional, revolutionary, and void; who, in furtherance of that scheme, revoked the policy of General Sheridan; who left the field of duty, to which he had been assigned by Andrew Johnson, in disgust, because General Grant stood behind him and revoked him and his policy; who endeavored to restore rebel civil authorities in a State in which Congress declared "no legal State government or adequate protection for life or property" then existed; and who in most vehement language denounced any one who assumed that he did not thoroughly

concur in and endorse this platform, upon which he (General Winfield Scott Hancock) declared that he unqualifiedly stood.

These declarations of principles, thus from time to time made by the Democratic party, are emphasized by the action of that party in Congress upon all measures looking to the reconstruction of the Union upon a solid and just foundation. That party opposed the fourteenth constitutional amendment; for in the vote upon that amendment in the Senate every Democrat voted nay, and in the House the negative vote was a solid Democratic one. The reconstruction acts were opposed by the Democratic party by a solid party vote. It also opposed the fifteenth constitutional amendment. The vote stood—in the Senate, yeas thirty-nine, all Republicans; nays, thirteen, all Democrats, including James R. Doolittle: in the House, nays forty-four, all Democrats.

These amendments having been adopted, it steadily and solidly opposed all legislation looking to their enforcement. The enforcement bill passed the Senate May, 1870, encountering there a solid Democratic opposition, and also a solid Democratic opposition in the House. It has repeatedly refused to affirm the validity of the fourteenth and fifteenth constitutional amendments. This steady and persistent opposition to those great measures has extended to the States. The Democratic Legislatures of the States of New York and Indiana withdrew the previous ratification by preceding Republican Legislatures of those amendments. In 1871 a resolution reciting the action of the Indiana Democratic Legislature, and reaffirming the validity of those amendments, encountered in the House a negative vote of seventy-six, all Democrats, and that party also opposed by a solid vote the Ku-klux and amendatory enforcement acts.

In 1872 but four Democrats could be found in the House to vote for a resolution ratifying the validity of those amendments. In 1875 it opposed by a solid party vote in the House and in the Senate the supplementary civil rights bill; and in National Convention assembled in 1880 it declares, "We pledge ourselves anew to the constitutional doctrines and traditions of the Democratic party as illustrated by the teaching and example of a long line of Democratic patriots and statesmen."

On these great questions the Democratic party is, from its history, doctrines, and traditions, shown to have been, and to be, reactionary and revolutionary.

Denouncing the reconstruction measures in 1868 as usurpations, revolutionary, unconstitutional, and void, and renewing its pledge

to its former doctrines and traditions in 1880, it is fair to assume that, if the opportunity presented by an enlargement of the Supreme Court to have that doctrine judicially declared unconstitutional, the Democratic party would avail itself of such an opportunity, and wreck not only those reconstruction measures, but the constitutional amendments which have their foundation upon them. This is no merely imaginary peril; we are abundantly forewarned. The havoc which would come from the successful carrying out of Democratic doctrines and traditions, involving all business interests, all legitimate enterprises in ruin, is too obvious to require comment. In 1872, made wiser by long-continued defeats, the Democratic party undertook to conceal its heretical notions of State sovereignty under the jingling phraseology of home rule and local self-government. Repudiated in 1872 and again in 1876, in its platform in 1880 it is content to declare in general terms, "Opposition to centralizationism and to that dangerous spirit of encroachment which tend to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever be the form of government, a real despotism"; and again, by its third plank, for "home rule." These are merely different coverings for the same idea, and taken in connection with a solid South—a South made solid by midnight raids, by a system of terrorism which drives all opposition from the polls, or by a fraudulent count which rifles the ballot-box after the vote is deposited—leave no room to doubt that the Democratic party of to-day is as dangerous in spirit and purpose to the best interests of the country as it has ever been.

Its record on financial questions has been continuously bad. I have noted the fact that in 1856 it declared against a national bank and denied the power of Congress to charter one. I may add that during the war it opposed all schemes for the creation of the national currency—the greenback and the national-bank note; that in Congress it denounced both as unconstitutional; that it has been a constant menace to the public credit; and that at the first opportunity which presented after the close of the war, in its National Convention in 1868, it demanded a line of policy which, had it been pursued, would have involved the country in the crime and covered it with the shame of repudiation. It demanded the payment of the public debt of the United States as rapidly as practicable, and yet declared, "Where the obligations of the Government do not expressly state upon their face, or the law made under which they were issued does not provide they shall be paid in coin, they ought

in right and justice to be paid in the lawful money of the United States," thus demanding the payment of the national debt in greenbacks. It also demanded equal "taxation of every species of property according to its real value, including Government bonds and other public securities." Upon this issue it went before the people in 1868 and was defeated; and this suicidal and dishonest doctrine received the hearty and unqualified endorsement and approval of their present candidate for President, General Winfield Scott Hancock.

In 1876 Mr. Tilden took charge of the "literary remains" of the Democratic party, and manufactured a platform which could be made available at the North, embodying in it some sound financial views, but denouncing the Republican party as being guilty of impeding resumption. The rank and file of the party understood the purpose of the platform perfectly well, and were not deceived or misled by it, and, in various States in which their State Conventions were held after their national platform had been adopted, they demanded the immediate repeal of the resumption act. The doctrines of the party on financial questions should be sought in the action of the representatives of that party on those questions in Congress.

In 1869 the public credit bill was opposed in Congress by the nearly solid vote of the Democratic party. In January, 1876, the bill to repeal the resumption act received one hundred and twelve votes, all Democrats but one. In June, 1876, as a rider to the civil appropriation bill, an amendment repealing the resumption act received solid Democratic support. Evidently the party had not been converted by its platform. In August, 1876, a measure to repeal the fixing of the time for resumption received in the House one hundred and six votes, all Democrats but three. And as late as 1878, in very many States, Democratic Conventions demanded the immediate repeal of the resumption act.

These are the doctrines of the party, not merely as declared by its representatives, but as crystallized into action; and in 1880 the party, in National Convention assembled, declares: "We pledge ourselves anew to the constitutional doctrines and traditions of the Democratic party as illustrated by the teaching and example of a long line of Democratic statesmen and patriots."

It makes in its platform of 1880 high-sounding pretensions of reform, and claims to have reduced the public expenditures forty millions of dollars per year. But the methods by which this pre-

tended reduction of expenditures has been effected are, when properly considered, gross extravagances. It has reduced the army and cut down the pay of its officers ; it has refused to make appropriations for the payment of judgments against the United States—thus making no real reduction in expenditures, for these judgments must ultimately be paid ; it has refused to make appropriations for the payment of the expenses of our Federal courts, thus in very many districts throughout the country reducing us to the necessity of adjourning courts from time to time, because no means have been furnished to pay juries or defray the ordinary court expenses ; it has refused to make appropriations to finish uncompleted public buildings, thus in the long run increasing the expenditures rather than diminishing them ; it has cut down the service in the Department of the Interior, and other departments, to such an extent that business in the Patent-Office and in the Pension Bureau is greatly in arrears ; it has refused to make adequate appropriation for the revenue-cutter service ; it has refused to make adequate appropriations for the repair and protection of navy-yards, stations, armories, and arsenals ; it has refused to make adequate appropriations for lighthouses, beacons, and fog-stations. These were not wise and economical reductions of public expenditures ; they were wasteful and demagogical extravagances. In the mean time the volume of Southern claims for losses during the war has multiplied, and the demands made by the South for appropriations for the improvement of their rivers, and for other purposes, are becoming more and more vehement.

Their platform calls for a free ballot, and General Hancock asserts that “neither fraud nor force must be allowed to subvert the rights of the people” ; that “the bayonet is not a fit instrument for collecting the votes of freemen” ; and that “it is only by a full vote, free ballot, and fair count that the people can rule in fact, as required by the theory of our Government.” This is certainly sound doctrine, but he should apply it to his own party—the party of which he is to-day the head and representative. There is no free ballot in the South, from which he confidently expects 138 electoral votes.

In 1872 the Republican vote of Alabama was 90,272 ; in 1878 it was nothing. In 1872 the Republican vote of Arkansas was 41,373 ; in 1878 it was 115. In 1872 the Republican vote of Mississippi was 82,175 ; in 1878 it was 1,168. These enormous reductions of the Republican vote can not be attributed to the conversion of Republicans through the agency of Mr. Tilden’s Literary Bureau, or by le-

gitimate methods. That vote was reduced by terrorism, by violence, by fraud. The Democratic majority in the State of Alabama, in the election recently held there, is returned at 92,000 ; but this, all concede, is larger than the entire Democratic vote of the State. Surely, in the language of General Hancock, "it is only by a full vote, free ballot, and fair count that the people can rule in fact." But here are instances where upon one side there is no vote ; where upon one side the ballot is fettered ; where upon one side the ballot is not counted at all. Ordinarily the bayonet is not a fit instrument for collecting the votes of freemen, but the constitutional amendments guarantee this free vote, and provide that Congress shall enforce the provisions of those articles by appropriate legislation. If the ballot can be gathered in no other way than by the bayonet, I know of no better use to which the bayonet can be devoted. And, if the ballot-box is surrounded by men organized and armed to prevent the casting of the ballot, the bayonet will be employed for a very lofty purpose if used to prick those armed men into a proper appreciation of the fact that the national guarantee of the free ballot must be respected and must be obeyed.

So far as the industrial interests of the country are concerned, the Democratic platform of 1880 voices the long-known and well-understood ideas of the party. It hates protection, it has always opposed it, and in its present platform it speaks unqualifiedly for a tariff for *revenue only*. That General Hancock is in full accord with this doctrine of the party is evident from his letter of acceptance, for he says, "The principles enumerated by the Convention are those I have cherished in the past, and shall endeavor to maintain in the future." The Democratic Convention enumerated its principles, and under the fourth enumeration is found the doctrine of a tariff for *revenue only*. General Hancock declares that this principle he has "cherished in the past," and further avers that he will "endeavor to maintain it in the future."

The position of General Garfield upon this question is outspoken, clear, and unmistakable. From 1866 down to the present time he has been a steady and intelligent friend of protection to American industries. He has exhibited this friendship to this great interest not merely by his speeches, but by his votes. He joined with other Republican members of the Committee of Ways and Means in a minority report opposing Mr. Wood's tariff bill, and his votes during the last session of Congress have always been found on that committee in harmony with his position.

General Hancock declares in his letter of acceptance that the constitutional amendments are inviolable, but he will hardly undertake to declare that he would veto any measure which a Democratic majority might pass for the enlargement of the Supreme Court, or that he would veto any measure which the same party might pass repealing the laws now on the statute-book for the enforcement of those amendments. With the Supreme Court thus enlarged and those statutes repealed, the constitutional amendments would be (as every one knows) nullities. Declaring himself to be in favor of a free ballot, he must be quite well aware that his party in Congress has repeatedly sought the repeal of the election laws, by which alone can anything approximating a free ballot and a fair count be secured in our great cities in the North, through which alone can the perpetration of gross frauds in the ballot-box in the great Northern cities be prevented. The solid South does not desire the repeal of those election laws for its own purposes — the shot-gun, the midnight raid, and the fraudulent count have sufficiently nullified those laws there. Their repeal is demanded, however, by the Democratic party, in order that the States of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut may be added to the solid South. And surely General Hancock will not undertake to say that, in the event of his election, should those statutes be repealed, he will veto such repealing measures. But without such veto we should have neither a free ballot nor a fair count.

In view of the history of the Democratic party, which I have thus hurriedly traced, drawing it from its platforms and its votes in Congress, it is not at all strange that it should be most anxious to be rid of it, but a people who have suffered so much from that history will not forget it. With this history behind it, with no honest effort to reverse its policy, which in the past has been so dangerous, the Democratic party, failing to furnish any additional reasons for an increase of public confidence in it or in its policy, demands that the public confidence, so long withheld, shall be restored to it.

Standing in the midst of an unrivaled prosperity, due in a great measure to an honest administration of public affairs, which the Democratic party has steadily opposed, occupying a position where all business and industrial interests are solidly thriving, the people of this country desire no change which would reverse the policy that has led us up to these magnificent results.

EMERY A. STORRS.